

the two best pieces of legislation have been the Old Age Security Act, as it was passed in 1951, and the Family Allowances Act, as it was passed in 1944. I think legislation that accepts Canadians as Canadians and does not divide people according to their wealth or poverty is good Canadian legislation. I do not like to see this good legislation being wiped from the statute books and replaced by a piece of legislation brought in under the euphemistic term "selectivity" but under which the government, by applying a means test, will be dividing the people of this country into those who have and those who do not have. Therefore I want to vote against this proposal to wipe out the 1944 Family Allowances Act. I think it was a good piece of legislation and this Parliament should confirm the wisdom of those who were here in 1944.

• (1250)

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, a while ago the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) spoke about trusting the mothers of Canada rather than Tory lawyers. I want to say that I cannot trust him and I do not understand what he is attempting to do in moving a motion which in my view is legally impossible to accept. I think the hon. member was very fair in that he said that anyone interpreting his motion would appreciate that if it were adopted we would in effect have the Family Allowances Act, the Youth Allowances Act and also Bill C-170. What the hon. member is attempting to do is to show his disgust, if I may use the term, at the action of the government in removing the excellent plan that has been implemented over the years. But why we have to go through this manoeuvre in order to prove that point is beyond me.

Let us suppose that by chance the amendment carried. We have to be responsible lawyers and responsible laymen within this chamber in bringing forward motions. I say that the bill will be an administrative nightmare in any event because of the criteria that are set down with respect to the number of children involved, the ages of the children and income. It has been pointed out time and time again that because of changing circumstances that affect each and every one of these criteria those who should be able to take advantage of this legislation will find themselves in a rather difficult position every month because even within that time span we can expect differences of age to become apparent, incomes to change or a child to be born. What it comes down to is whether in effect we can accept the motion of the hon. member. With all due respect to him I find that it is not feasible.

The hon. member did not say how much cost his motion would entail. I was not being facetious when I asked him about this. The hon. member appears to have thought that in order to register his profound objection to the way in which the government is now approaching the matter he should advocate that all these acts be operative at the same time. But if we are going to discuss this motion sensibly we should at least know what it means in terms of money. I have heard nothing about that. As a matter of fact, I know that the hon. member did not wish to pursue the matter further. What he wanted to do was to register his concern.

We have registered objections regarding the departure from the principle of universality and the adoption of

selectivity in the plan. We have all made pertinent points and questioned the sudden change of thinking in this regard. In a recent speech the minister said that the middle-income people—

Mr. MacEachen: Order!

Mr. Alexander: The government House leader says "order" because he knows what I am going to say. I think the minister revealed the government's position when he stated that the middle-income group will have to pay the shot in the future. Universality will disappear and as a result the middle-income group will have no incentive to continue paying.

Mr. Munro: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps in my reply later I can indicate specifically what I said because I do not want to be misquoted. The hon. member is guilty of gross distortion when he makes remarks of that kind. This is not at all what I said. If he would care to get a copy of my speech, which was sent to the leader of his party, he can read my remarks.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): If he reads them he will have more criticisms.

Mr. Alexander: Let me put it this way, Mr. Speaker. It is my considered opinion that it is the position of the government that the middle-income group will have to pay the shot. I recall that the other day questions were asked of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) about whether in fact this is the policy of the government. The answer given was certainly ambiguous and evasive. All indications can lead us to no other conclusion. If the minister takes exception to this, I will withdraw my remark as it applies to him personally and apply it to the government benches in general. That will bring them all into the boat, and if they want to rise on a question of personal privilege they are quite entitled to do so under the rules. All I wish to say is that people must be given incentives if they are to pay continually for a good program. Parliamentary democracy allows people to register their concern, and this concern will be made apparent if one particular group in society is continually made to pay. May I call it one o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 2 p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. HALES—ALLEGED ERRORS IN TABLING OF REPORT OF NATIONAL HARBOURS BOARD

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege concerning the tabling of a report prepared by the National Harbours Board on Friday, June 23. I am rising at the earliest possible opportunity. My